

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
SY-05 HA-05 /074 W
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R 140846Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY DACCA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 439
INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 4983

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS PINT BG
SUBJECT: ARMS SEIZED, THIRTEEN ARRESTED AT DACCA UNIVERSITY

REF: DACCA 4801

1. EARLY ON THE MORNING OF AUGUST 11, DACCA POLICE CORDONED OFF THE DACCA UNIVERSITY CAMPUS AND ENTERED TWO RESIDENTIAL HALLS, SERGEANT ZAHURUL HUQ HALL AND THE ADJOINING ABU SAYEED HALL. THE RAID RESULTED IN SEIZURE OF A CACHE OF ARMS AND AMMUNITION AND THE ARREST OF THIRTEEN PERSONS, INCLUDING TEN STUDENTS. AMONG THE CONFISCATED WEAPONS WERE ONE STEN GUN, THREE REVOLVERS, ONE SUBMACHINE GUN, ONE GRENADE AND AN ASSORTMENT OF DAGGERS AND BAYONETS.

2. FOLLOWING THE ABRUPT SUSPENSION OF CLASSES JULY 31 (REFTEL) THERE WAS SPECULATION THAT POLICE WOULD USE THE OPPORTUNITY AFFORDED BY AN EXTENDED RAMAZAN VACATION TO TAKE STRONGER ACTION AGAINST LAW AND ORDER PROBLEMS ON CAMPUS THAN THEY HAD PREVIOUSLY. ALTHOUGH THERE WERE NO OUTBREAKS OF VIOLENCE DURING THE CLASS SESSION THAT

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BEGAN JULY 4, THERE WERE COMPLAINTS OF DACOITY IN RESIDENTIAL HALLS AND REPORTS OF SIZABLE STORES OF WEAPONS. IN CARRYING OUT THE RAID POLICE APPARENTLY ACTED ON A TIP WHICH LED THEM TO THE CACHE IN SERGEANT ZAHURUL HUQ HALL. THEY ENTERED ONLY THAT AND ABU SEYEED HALL DURING THE APPROXIMATELY SIX HOURS THAT THE CAMPUS WAS CORDONED OFF.

3. THE RAID DREW FAVORABLE REACTIONS FROM SEVERAL STUDENT GROUPS WHICH HAD PREVIOUSLY CRITICIZED THE LACK OF ACTION AGAINST THE PRESENCE OF ARMS ON THE CAMPUS. PRESS COMMENTS ON THE RAID QUESTIONED WHETHER THE SEIZURE OF A RELATIVELY SMALL CACHE OF ARMS WOULD REALLY CHANGE THE SITUATION AND CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE FIRMER STEPS TO ELIMINATE THE "POLITICS OF GUNS" ON CAMPUS. THE RAMAZAN VACATION, WHICH EXTENDS UNTIL AFTER THE EID-UL-FITR HOLIDAY IN EARLY SEPTEMBER, PRESENTS THE GOVERNMENT WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE SUCH STEPS, BUT THUS FAR IT HAS ACTED WITH CAUTION. THOUGH THE RAID WAS MOST DECISIVE ACTION TAKEN BY POLICE SINCE CAMPUS POLITICS BEGAN TO HEAT UP THIS YEAR, IT STOPPED SHORT OF THE GENERAL SHAKEDOWN OF STUDENT RESIDENTIAL QUARTERS THAT MANY BELIEVE IS NECESSARY TO RID THE CAMPUS OF WEAPONS.
BAXTER

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